



ARKANSAS

Arkansas State Board of Education
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Program Overview

In October 2007, the Arkansas State Board of Education approved the Rewarding Excellence in Achievement Program (REAP) to support the development of alternative compensation plans by public schools, charter schools, and school districts. Participating schools and districts must reward teachers based on student learning gains at the classroom and school levels, teacher evaluations, and teacher skills and knowledge.

Districts and charter schools that wish to participate in REAP must apply for the program, and public schools that are interested must apply through a district. The program established criteria to ensure participation from schools and districts that represent a variety of locations, sizes, and poverty levels. The state plans to select three participants of varying population sizes (less than 1,000 students, between 1,000 and 8,000 students, and more than 8,000 students) from each congressional district. In addition, the state expects to select participants from each congressional district based on the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch (one participant each of greater than 90 percent, between 70 percent and 90 percent, and less than 70 percent). To the extent possible, the state aims to mix the student population congressional districts and demographic congressional districts to maximize the variety of student population representation in REAP.

Additionally, the application process requires that participating schools and districts use a 12-month planning phase period to obtain buy-in from stakeholders, acquire necessary resources and develop a compensation plan. Participating schools must have approved comprehensive school improvement plans. Further, at least 70 percent or a majority of teachers must approve participation in the grant, and the local school board must provide approval. Individual teachers can choose to opt out of the compensation plans.

Although participating schools and districts can design their own compensation plans, the State Board defines the basis for the rewards:

- **Student Learning Gains.** Schools and districts must base between 40 percent and 60 percent of the award on student learning gains for individual teachers and schoolwide student learning gains.



- **Knowledge and Skills.** Schools and districts must base 40 percent to 60 percent of the award on objective evaluations, with one evaluation conducted by the principal and another by a peer.

The Arkansas Department of Education will conduct an annual evaluation of the REAP initiative for each participating school. The evaluation indicators include student scores on state tests, student attendance, student grades, and discipline issues. Furthermore, each participating school must conduct a self-evaluation on the program and report any changes by April 15 each year to the local school board. The local school board will forward the evaluation and recommendations to the Commissioner of Education, who then will allocate funds for the following year based on the evaluation findings.

Program Information

- [REAP Information](#)
- [REAP Rubric, 2007–08 Application](#)

Select Articles and Reports

- *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* (October 4, 2008). [Fayetteville: Educator Advises Adjusting Merit Pay.](#)
- Arkansas Department of Education. [News Release: June 26, 2008](#)
- National Governor's Association. (October 18, 2007). [Arkansas State Board Approves Performance Pay.](#)